

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As the Department of Education continues to monitor the impact of the coronavirus on schools across the country, we respectfully request that you consider the ways in which we can mitigate the potential financial burden placed on students at higher education institutions due to the coronavirus.

The coronavirus has quickly spread across the United States, with thousands of confirmed cases in every state in the country. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, college campuses across the nation are bringing students back from study abroad programs, canceling educational programming, and moving to online classes. Most recently, some schools have required their students to move out of their on-campus housing for the duration of their spring classes and relocate to other homes.

While we recognize the utmost importance of keeping our students safe at higher education institutions, we are also aware of the financial burdens created by some of these safety measures. For example, some students have shared that they are unable to afford travel back to their permanent homes. In the hopes of addressing concerns such as these, we request that you work to identify how students may be reimbursed for any educational expenditures related to the coronavirus.

As many students have already taken out loans to pay for their educational expenses, we encourage you to provide further clarification on the details of the student loan debt interest relief that was announced by President Trump and work with lenders, education institutions, and the students to ensure students are not left paying for educational benefits that they did not receive. We also request the department work with higher education institutions in order to guarantee reimbursements for housing expenses if students are forced to relocate to their permanent homes. Furthermore, it is critical that students are reimbursed for study abroad programs and tuition costs if their programs and semesters are cut short. It is critical that we protect our students' health, but we must also ensure the financial impacts of any protective measures do not fall on students.

We thank you for your diligence in ensuring that the Department of Education has kept school and university administrators informed and prepared to address the coronavirus. We ask that you join us in safeguarding our students' health while also protecting their access to an affordable education.

Sincerely,